

Many people assume that mincemeat is hard to make. It's not. It's one of the easiest things in the kitchen to make. It's also one of the most shared projects, then mincemeat is it. Lots of hands doing the mixing and lots of taste-buds evaluating the product are very useful. Since mincemeat is not cooked until it is put into the pie, even the smallest child can join in without fear of burns.

Mincemeat recipes vary in detail a great deal. There is no classic version, so you can make adjustments of flavourings to suit your taste. An important point to remember is not to put in too

many apples. Commercial mincemeat makers do this because it changes the texture of the fruit. Too many of them detract from the flavour and texture. And don't omit the suet. During cooking it melts and lubricates both the mincemeat and the pastry. Sherry, rum, brandy and Guinness are all good in mincemeat.

William Hone's final word is

But happy they, thrice happy, who possess
The art to mix these sweets with due address,
And hold the rolling pin a sacred trust.

English mince and apple pie,
eaten with cheese in the North
(Christmas Archives
International)



Recipes

MINCEMEAT

- 4 lbs apples
- 1 lb suet
- 2 lbs raisins
- 2 lbs sultanas (golden raisins)
- 1 1/2 lbs currants
- 1/2 lb dark brown sugar
- 4 oz candied peel
- 12 oz red glacé cherries
- 3 lemons
- 1 whole nutmeg
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon whole allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon ground pepper
- 3 lbs brown sugar
- 2 cups water (sherry)
- 1/2 cup brandy (optional)

When you buy the suet, ask the butcher to grind it for you. If you fail to persuade him to do this, cut it into large chunks and freeze it. While it is still frozen grate it with a cheese grater or a food processor. Orange suet isn't hard, but it can be a greasy job

and it's the only part of making mincemeat that isn't pleasant. Put the ground suet into a very large bowl and add the other ingredients to it. Peel and grate the apples and add the grated apples to the mixture. Cut the cherries out into slices. Grate the nutmeg on the finest part of a grater and crush the allspice. Add them with all the other spices. Finely grate the yellow part of the lemon peel and add it together with the juice of the fruit. Stir in the sugar and the sherry and brandy.

This is the stage at which you can begin to taste. Mincemeat should be spicy so make sure you have sufficient. (The above proportions are guidelines rather than rules.) Add more sugar if you'd like a sweeter mix. After a day or two the mixture will absorb some of the liquid. At

this point you might want to add a little more sherry or extra juice. If you find that the mincemeat is too sloppy, add a little more suet. The mixture should be plumped up.

After a week of daily stirrings and tastings, pack the mincemeat into sterilized jars and store for two weeks or longer before using. You can sterilize jars by boiling them in water for 5 minutes or by heating them in a 250° oven for 10 minutes. Tradition has it that each member of the family should stir the mincemeat before it is packed away, making a silent wish as they do so.

When you use your mincemeat to make a pie, stir it up thoroughly. The mincemeat should be as moist as the jam is noisier than that at the top.

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ORANGE MINCEMEAT

This recipe is from Jane Grigson's English Food

- 1/2 lb candied orange and lemon
- 2 lbs apples, peeled, cored, chopped
- 1 lb suet, chopped
- 1 lb raisins
- 1 lb sultanas
- 1 lb currants
- 1 lb dark brown sugar
- 1 whole nutmeg, grated
- 4 oz blanched sliced almonds
- 2 oranges, rind and juice
- 4 tablespoons brandy

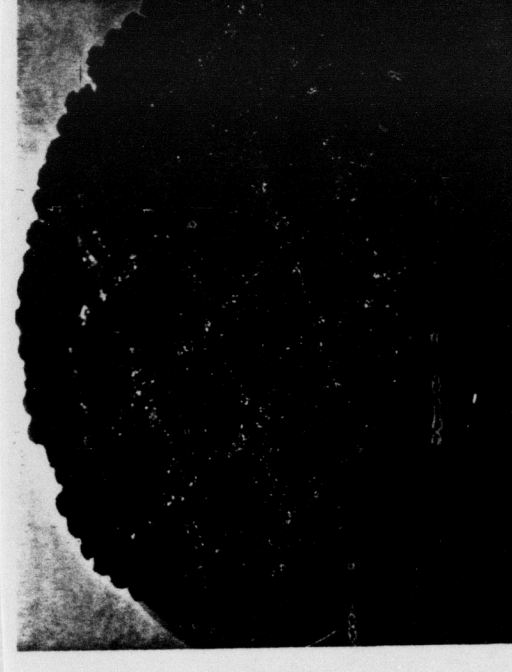
68 tablespoons orange liqueur

Mix ingredients in the order given. Put and cover the mixture as in foregoing recipe. (Good choices for the liqueur are Grand Marnier or Cointreau).

MINCE PIES

- 1 lb flour
- 4 oz butter
- 4 oz lard
- 1/2 cup or more ice water
- 1 1/2 lbs mincemeat
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

Have the ingredients cold. Rub the butter and lard into the flour, working quickly. When the mixture looks like fine breadcrumbs, add about a quarter of a cup of ice water and pull the mixture together to form a dough. Add more water as necessary, using only a spoonful or so at a time so that you don't add too much. The dough should rest in a cool place for 10 minutes and then take about half of it and roll it out on a floured board.



Mince pie (Anthony Blake)

To make a large pie, take a deep dish, grease it lightly and line it with the pastry. Fill with the mincemeat. Roll out the remaining dough. Wet the edge of the pastry-case with water then lay the second piece of pastry over the top. Firm off the excess and press the edges together, pinching them decoratively or marking them with the back of a fork. Push the top of the pie over it. Cut some slits to let out the steam and bake for 15 minutes at 425°, then reduce the heat to 350° and bake for a further 10 to 15 minutes or until the top is nicely brown. Serve warm with custard.

For small mince pies, follow the above instructions but use a large pastry-cutter to cut out the pastry for the bottoms of the tarts and a small pastry-cutter for the tops. Use party pans or muffin pans to make small individual tarts. Don't overfill the tarts. The mincemeat can be used as a filling for small pies or as a spread for scones. Bake in a greased and floured tin for 35 to 45 minutes at 325°. Test for doneness by pressing a skewer into the middle. When it comes out dry the cake is done.

the finished tarts instead. This gives a nice snowy effect.

MINCEMEAT CAKE

Often a relatively small amount of mincemeat is left, scarcely enough for a pie. This cake recipe from Annie Brown of Kingsley, Cheshire, makes good use of the odd half jar or so.

- 1 stick (1/4 lb) butter
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 2 eggs
- 7 tablespoons flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 8 oz sultanas
- 2 oz glacé cherries
- 1 tablespoon marmalade

Cream the butter with the sugar. Beat in the eggs. Sift the flour and the cinnamon together and fold into the creamed mixture. Stir in the mincemeat, cherries and marmalade. Bake in a greased and floured tin for 35 to 45 minutes at 325°. Test for doneness by pressing a skewer into the middle. When it comes out dry the cake is done.

For SEP, mincemeat is a year-round event.
I'm interesting that & please have independently
Created a recipe for "Mincemeat Cake."

5831 Conway Road
Bethesda, Md. 20817
November 23, 1986

Dear Bob,

First off, I would like to express my appreciation to you, Henry Loftus and the Society for locating and reprinting the history of St. Rose Parish. When I received my copy, I spent an entire evening studying the fascinating history, great for further checking. You may recall, when we met during the Pioneer Days celebration during the summer of 1985, I mentioned my interest in the family of Capt. William Brennan and the White family from White's Crossing. The parish history certainly did justice to both families.

During the course of our August 1985 conversation, you made reference to a complete set of records from the Mayor's Court from the early 1850's through 1878 being available on microfilm in Carbondale, possibly at the city library. I plan to be back in Carbondale during the week of December 1, and a family friend recently checked with the library at my request to confirm that the microfilms would be available there. The word I received was that the location of the microfilms was correct. I would most certainly like to arrange to leave a set of these microfilms at the library for me to research for naturalization records. I look forward to starting with Capt. Brennan's wife - Ellen Bergen Brennan - in 1851, and my Great Grandfather - Luke White - who was naturalized by the Mayor's Court on October 11, 1870.

I admire the outstanding work that you and the members of the Society have done in the past and I am sure that the 1987 Carbondale Historical Calendar should become a true collector's item. As a token of my appreciation, I have enclosed a check as a contribution to the further work of the Society.

I hope that our paths might cross again during the week of December 1. If you want to contact me about the availability of the microfilms, I will be staying with Mrs. Paul Mullisky, 9 Birkett Street (282-0506).

Sincerely,

Bill Brown

I telephoned Mrs. Mullisky
on Saturday morning and
told her to tell Bill Brennan
that I wanted to available
when he arrived. I also gave
Frank a copy of this letter &
he called Brennan on Monday
(12/1/86) and took charge of
the research request. On
Monday night when I arrived
at city Hall for our C&S&M
work session, Hank and
Brennan were deep in genealogical
work.